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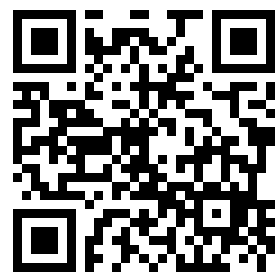

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ARMY.

DISTURBANCES IN THE PUNJAB.

STATEMENT BY BRIG.-GENERAL R. E. H. DYER, C.B.

Presented to Parliament by Command of His Majesty.

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From BRIG.-GENERAL R. E. H. DYER, C.B.

To THE SECRETARY,
WAR OFFICE,
LONDON, S.W.

33, Clarges Street, W.,
3rd July, 1920.

Sir,

In compliance with the permission given to me in War Office letter of 9th June, 1920, I have the honour to submit the statement which follows:—

1. INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF ISSUES.

I necessarily assume that the action taken against me by the various authorities concerned is based on the report of and the proceedings before the Hunter Committee with regard to the events at Amritsar on or after the 11th April, 1919.

I assume this because I know of no other matters in respect of which any adverse comment has been made upon my conduct and because the Adjutant-General in India on 22nd March, 1920, when he personally informed me of the decision that I must resign my appointment, stated that the ground of the decision was that the Hunter Committee had reported adversely to me.

My present statement will therefore be confined in substance to defending myself against the adverse criticisms of me contained in the report of the majority of the Hunter Committee, in the despatch of the Government of India, dated the 3rd May, 1920, forwarding the report to His Majesty's Government, and in the reply to that despatch by His Majesty's Government signed by the Secretary of State on the 26th May, 1920, both the latter being clearly founded upon the material supplied by the Hunter Committee.

If I go occasionally outside these official criticisms it is only because I cannot wholly ignore some unofficial criticisms (including some of those contained in the Minority report) which have appeared in public, gravely detrimental to my reputation and which in justice to myself I must ask permission to deal with. I cannot, indeed, on the information before me ignore the possibility that such extraneous matters have influenced or may influence the action taken against me.

It is clear from the official documents above referred to that the main question I have to deal with is whether my action in dealing with the assembly in the Jallianwallah Bagh on the afternoon of the 13th April was too impetuous and too drastic.

Subsidiary questions are also raised (*a*) as to the omission to provide medical attendance for the wounded, and (*b*) as to the propriety of an order issued by me some days later regarding the use by natives of the street where Miss Sherwood was assaulted.

It is to the consideration of the judgments pronounced upon me regarding each of these matters that this statement is mainly devoted.

This is the first chance I have had of dealing with these criticisms, which I did not see till the recent publication of documents after my return home from India.

I wish to satisfy the Army Council that my action in these matters was justifiable, and that the criticisms are unfounded. I will do this as shortly as possible. There is a great mass of evidence and comment in the Bluebook; but I assume that the Army Council will have read all the relevant passages, only a few of which I propose to cite as illustrations.

It will not, however, escape notice that in order to get exoneration from censure I am not called upon to go so far as to prove that at every stage I did right, nor is the Army Council called upon to take the burden upon itself of so deciding; all that is really necessary is for me to show that, situated as I was, I acted for the best and had reasonable ground for my action.

It will be seen that I am able to place before the Army Council some official material not in the Bluebooks; in particular (1), the report of my Brigade-Major, Captain F. C. Briggs, D.S.O., who died before he could give evidence (Appendix A.); (2) the speech of the Adjutant-General of India to the Legislative Council on 19th September, 1919 (Appendix B); (3) some results of the findings of courts held for the trial of rebels at Amritsar.

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2 Summary of Charges in regard to Firing in Jallianwallah Bagh.

I will discuss the main question first.

The criticisms of my action in dealing with the crowd in the Jallianwallah Bagh may be shortly summarized as follows:—

(*a.*) Majority Report of the Hunter Committee (paragraphs 39 and 40).

The Committee blame me first for not giving a warning to the Assembly before I ordered fire to be opened so as to give people a chance to disperse. In continuing firing so long, the Committee hold that I committed a grave error, and that I had in view not merely the dispersal of the crowd that had assembled, but the desire to produce a moral effect in the Punjaub, and that this was a mistaken conception of my duty, inasmuch as continued firing upon a crowd cannot be justified because of the effect such firing may have upon people in other places.

(*b.*) The despatch of the Government of India to the Secretary of State (paragraphs 21 and 44).

The Government of India declare that I could and should have given warning to the crowd before opening firing, that my action in continuing to fire after the crowd had begun to disperse was indefensible, and greatly exceeded the necessity of the occasion, and that I went beyond what any reasonable man could have thought to be necessary, and that I did not act with as much humanity as the case permitted.

(*c.*) The reply of the Secretary of State (paragraph 3) reiterates some of these criticisms and adds others.

It is there stated in particular that I acted in violation of the principle that the military when dealing with civil disturbances must use the minimum of force necessary, that the force I actually employed was greatly in excess of requirements, that my omission to give warning before fire was opened was inexcusable, that I had no right to punish an unarmed crowd which had not committed violence or tried to oppose me, and many members of which must have been ignorant of my orders, and that my conception of my duty was fundamentally at variance with that which the Government require from an officer.

The whole of the passages referred to will be before the Army Council *in extenso* in the several documents in question and I need not set them out in greater detail here.

3. Irregular and Prejudicial Method of Investigation.

All these adverse criticisms are admittedly founded upon the report and proceedings of the Hunter Committee.

I must therefore, at the outset, point out to the Army Council that, however suitable those proceedings and report may have been as a guide to the formation of a general political opinion about the rebellion in India, and as an investigation of historical causes or of particular events, they were not such as to constitute in my case a judicial or regular enquiry into or trial of the conduct of an individual.

The wide terms of reference ("to investigate the recent disturbances in Bombay, Delhi and the Punjaub, their causes and the measures taken to cope with them") hardly suggest that the trial of individuals was intended to be the function of the Committee.

In my case the procedure of a trial was not attempted. I received no notice of any charges against me. My official superiors had indeed up till then approved my conduct on the main question. I came and gave my evidence entirely unrepresented and undefended and in no sense expecting to find myself an accused person. I was present, except for a few hours on one casual occasion, during no part of the hearing of other witnesses, and apart from sometimes seeing newspaper summaries had no knowledge of what evidence they gave, or any opportunity to ask questions or elicit information, and no kind of address or argument was addressed to the Committee on my behalf. No member of the Committee constituted himself my advocate (it would clearly have been improper for any member to have done so), while several acted as my prosecutors, cross-examined me, and sought to establish a case against me, a course which their legal qualifications enabled them to pursue with special efficiency. I was furnished with no proof or transcript of my evidence, and had no opportunity to say anything by way of addition or qualification, or even to correct verbal inaccuracies. (Some of the phrases attributed to me I do not now recognise). I never indeed saw my evidence or any of the criticisms of me until the recent publication of the Bluebook.

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The anomalous result has been that I saw then for the first time and all at once charges, evidence and findings.

It is clear that this procedure was not in accordance with the course of justice normally observed at the hearing of complaints or charges against an individual.

It will be equally obvious to the Army Council that the procedure was wholly irregular according to military law and custom. A military court of enquiry, which is the normal method of investigating, if detailed investigation is needed, the conduct of an individual subject to military discipline requires his attendance throughout the proceedings, with the express object of assuring that he shall have full knowledge of any case which is being established against him, and an opportunity of dealing with charges suggested or evidence adduced adverse to him.

The case of a court-martial is still clearer, as then definite charges based on definite evidence have to be formulated in advance, and a proper opportunity has to be afforded for the preparation of the defence.

I do not wish to complain against the Committee for not adopting such a procedure. The scope and nature of its enquiry may not have permitted it. But in the absence of the normal requisites of a judicial investigation of the conduct of individuals, I ask that the Army Council will not regard the proceedings of the Committee as in any way conclusive, but will form its own judgment of my conduct as a soldier, giving due regard to the submissions which follow.

The Hunter Committee was, moreover, primarily and substantially a civil Committee. What is in question now is my conduct as an officer while administering martial law during a rebellion, and that should be judged by a military tribunal.

My treatment for nearly a year after the events at Amritsar further requires consideration. I had reported those events at once. (Appendix C.) Not only was I in no way criticised for my handling of the crisis, but I received immediate official approval. I was likewise in no way suspended from my duties, pending enquiry, the normal military course in the case of an officer whose conduct is to be the subject of censure or penalty. On the contrary I was promoted and also given a command on active service in the field.

I deal below more fully with the action of the military authorities in India at the time in approving my conduct or exonerating me from blame. I mention it here, because it demonstrates that I did not come before the Committee as an accused person, and had no occasion to provide myself with expert assistance in my absence.

The great delay before the enquiry started has likewise been a disadvantage to me, as officers and civilians who could have given important testimony had in the interval become unavailable. Criticisms publicly made by Sir Michael O'Dwyer of the complete suitability of the Committee to judge the Punjaub Government should not be ignored in justice to myself as an agent of that Government.

4. The Principle of "Minimum Force."

The principle is laid down by the Secretary of State that an officer in suppressing civil disturbances must use the minimum amount of force necessary for the purpose. I am well acquainted with this principle, and have at all times fully accepted it. Quite apart from the ordinary experience of an officer of my seniority and length of service in the Indian Army, I had had special occasion and opportunity to study principles in this connection, as for five years I held the staff appointment of Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-General for instruction in military law, and the administration of martial law during civil disturbances was necessarily a subject of study by me in that capacity. I had this principle very clearly before me during the whole time I was in Amritsar, and I never at any time failed to act up to it to the best of my judgment and capacity. I say with all sincerity that I acted upon this principle when firing upon the assembly at Amritsar on the 13th April, and according to the best of my judgment (and no one was in a better position to judge than myself) I used no more force than was required by the occasion. This contention I hope to make good in what follows.

5. Statement of Situation and Narrative of Events.

I now wish, as shortly as I can, to make clear the situation with which I was confronted in Amritsar, and the nature of the action which I took.

I will not again set out the history of the events which is told in the Hunter Report and recapitulated in the despatch of the Government of India and will only refer to the more important and significant features of the situation.

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As military commander of the whole Jullundur district of which Amritsar is but one point, I was in touch with the general situation, and during the events which followed I was kept in touch also with the general situation in the Punjaub. I had very recently toured through Delhi and other districts, and had been struck with the general unrest and the inflammable nature of many elements of the population. With the Sikh population of the countryside I was particularly well acquainted. The threatening nature of the Afghan situation was also present to me, also the weakness of the internal military situation and the threat to communications. To shorten this part of the narrative, I have summarized in a later paragraph the military considerations as they occurred to me.

On my arrival at Amritsar, on the evening of the 11th April, as is generally conceded, I was confronted with a crisis of the gravest kind. On the 10th the mob had risen, killed everyone of European nationality in the city upon whom it could lay hands, burned banks and Government buildings, and had been held off the European settlement outside the city only with the greatest difficulty. The situation had already been handed over to the local commander by the civil authorities as being a military one and beyond their control.

I found a clear conviction upon the part of the local officials and abundant signs that a determined and organized movement was in progress to submerge and destroy all the Europeans on the spot and in the district and to carry the movement throughout the Punjaub, and that the mob in the city and the excitable population of the villages were being organized for this purpose. In the end general looting and mob violence against the whole law-abiding Indian population as well as against the troops and authorities would have resulted.

For two days the city had been in the hands of the mob, and no Government official or European could enter it without an escort of troops. That in law and in fact I was confronted not with a riot, but with open rebellion, the Hunter Committee explicitly find (Report page 66, paragraph 3).

The very restrained firing by troops and police which had taken place on the 10th had produced no effect at all, and the situation was more menacing than ever.

There is much material in the official documents to make clear the situation.

Admittedly Amritsar was the worst place concerned in the rebellion:

"The Amritsar incidents may be regarded as the high water mark of the disorders" . . (*Majority Report*, Chapter XI., paragraph 4.)

Even the Minority concur:—

"Amritsar, where the disturbances first took place and were of the worst character" . . (*Minority*, Chapter III., page 99.)

The Secretary of State summarizes the situation very clearly:—

"In Amritsar itself violence, murder and arson of the most savage description had occurred three days previously, and the city was still practically in possession of the mob. From the surrounding countryside reports were hourly being received of violent similar outbreaks and attacks upon communications, and the deficiencies in these reports (due to the success of attacks upon communications) were supplemented by rumours which there was very little means of verifying and as little ground for disbelieving." (*Despatch*, page 24.)

I had only a small force of troops at my disposal consisting of at the outset 475 British and 710 Indian, many of them only partially trained. Amritsar is a city of 150,000 people, and the countryside is densely populated with a people of an inflammable character. The arrangement of the city and the civil lines did little to facilitate the problems of control and defence.

The signs which met me and the reports which I received left no doubt as to the existence of an organized mob with leaders, and a definite purpose of outrage and destruction.

The organization of mobs in Amritsar had been noticeable at a much earlier stage when violence was not expected.

Speaking of the organization of the initial agitation about the 6th April, Mr. Miles Irving, the Deputy-Commissioner, Amritsar, gave evidence as follows:—

"*Q.* After the 6th, how did the situation strike you?

"*A.* They were working up for some kind of mischief which I could not foresee. It struck me that the leaders of the movement were disciplining the mob with a view to some concerted form of passive disobedience to authority which would paralyse Government.

"*Q.* But so far as any immediate act of violence is concerned did you see anything that was being encouraged?

"*A.* My idea was that they intended to avoid any collision with authority that would justify Armed intervention and to train the mob to do what they were told." (Evidence Vol. III., page 3.)

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When, contrary to previous expectation, violence broke out, such organization quickly showed itself, and as Mr. Irving said later (page 11, Vol. III. Evidence) we found by experience there was sufficient organization down in the lowest stratum to go and spread with wonderful rapidity to do acts of violence. The formation of "Bludgeon Armies" (Danda Fauj) was a common matter of rebel propaganda, and the vast supplies of bludgeons which we intercepted on the railway a few days later were indications of the designs of the revolutionaries.

The events of the 12th and early part of the 13th April may be stated here in the summary afterwards given to the legislative Council by the Adjutant-General in his speech of the 19th September, 1919 :—

> "On the 11th and 12th he (Brigadier-General Dyer) reorganized his troops and on the 12th he marched a column round and through the city in order that a display of force might have its effect on the minds of the populace. We have it on record that the bearing of the inhabitants was most insolent, and that many spat on the ground as the troops passed. From the shouts of the mob it was clear that they were in an entirely unrepentant spirit. No military force was used on this occasion as the officer in command decided to issue proclamations as to his future intentions before employing such force. From a military point of view he would have been quite justified, I hold, in using force on that day, but the General Officer Commanding decided to pursue his policy of patience and conciliation. A proclamation was issued on the evening of the 12th, and on the morning of the 13th April the Officer Commanding marched with a body of troops through all the main streets of the city and announced by beat of drum his intentions of using force should occasion arise. The people were permitted to collect in order to hear the proclamations." (*Official Report*, 19th September, 1919, page 376.)

Reference should also be made to the report of my Brigade-Major, Captain F. C. C. Briggs, D.S.O. (Appendix A), which gives a succinct account of events at this stage.

The prohibition of assemblies in time of riot and disturbance is an elementary and well understood expedient in India, and no question is raised as to the justification for my proclamation or the announcement that any assembly gathering in defiance of it would be dispersed by force of arms. (The Hunter Committee say of a similar order issued at Ahmedabad that "the belief that all groups of more than 10 men would be fired on without warning did much to restore order.") (Report, page 14, paragraph 15.)

The method of issuing it, namely, the progress for 4½ hours of a body of troops about the city accompanied by the General himself and the Deputy-Commissioner, the summoning of the population by beat of drum, and the reading of it in two languages as they assembled, was itself an unusual and significant demonstration.

I hoped it would be sufficient to do something to quiet the situation.

But it was answered by an immediate challenge. I gradually learnt on my return to the civil lines that a counter-proclamation had been issued behind me, that the rumour had been set going that my action was mere pretence, and that I dared not fire, and that a meeting would be held in the Jallianwallah Bagh in the afternoon. Later the news came that the meeting was actually assembling.

I explain my motives and beliefs during the action which followed more fully below. Here it is sufficient to say that I know that the final crisis had come, and that the assembly was primarily of the same mobs which had murdered and looted and burnt three days previously, and showed their truculence and contempt of the troops during the intervening days, that it was a deliberate challenge to the Government forces, and that if it were not dispersed, and dispersed effectively, with sufficient impression upon the designs and arrogance of the rebels and their followers we should be overwhelmed during the night or the next day by a combination of the city gangs and of the still more formidable multitude from the villages. A crowd from the city of 30,000 had menaced the civil settlement on the 10th. Its audacity in the meantime had grown with its crimes and their immunity. The villages had been brought in, and I had to reckon upon the possibility of the irruption that night of some 30,000 Majha Sikh looters, if the whole movement were not decisively checked. As an illustration of the facts before me the following passage from Mr. Irving's evidence will be sufficient here :—

> "*Q.* Did you form any opinion as to what the intention of the mob was with reference to Government?
>
> "*A.* The mob in the Jallianwala?
>
> "*Q.* Generally speaking the mob in Amritsar, from the 10th to the 13th April?
>
> "*A.* I believe it seriously thought it had a chance of beating the Government. One of the ringleaders, when he was talked to, said, 'well, let us have the fight out'. That was somewhere between the 10th and 13th, when he was being talked to by a friendly Indian gentleman; that is what he said, I believe.
>
> "*Q.* Do you understand that to mean a fight out between the populace on the one hand and organized authority on the other?
>
> "*A.* Yes." (Evidence, Vol. III., page 7.)

I took the small force at my disposal, consisting of the picquetting parties and a

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special party consisting of 25 rifles 1/9th Gurkhas, 25 rifles 54th Sikhs, and 59th Sikhs and 40 Gurkhas armed only with kukries, and two armoured cars, and after dropping some necessary pickets arrived about 5 p.m. in the Jallianwallah Bagh with the special party, none of them at all highly trained men. I entered it at one end by a narrow passage, through which my armoured cars could not pass.

I found a large meeting, afterwards ascertained to be from 15,000 to 20,000 in number, being addressed by a speaker engaged in violent exhortation. The speakers at this meeting were in fact most, if not all, of them later convicted of sedition in connection with the disturbances. There were no women and children in the meeting, and its appearance confirmed the reports I had received as to its character.

The position was itself an anxious one from a purely military point of view—of the other aspects I speak below—as I was liable to be assailed from behind, and the extrication of my small force from the city would have been practically impossible if after the firing the rebels had maintained an aggressive spirit.

Hesitation I felt would be dangerous and futile, and as soon as my fifty riflemen had deployed I ordered fire to be opened. The crowd began to scatter to the various exits. After some firing two groups appeared to be collecting as though to rush us, and on my Brigade-Major calling my attention to this I directed fire specially to the two points in question, and dispersed the groups. (*See* Capt. Briggs' report.) When 1,650 rounds or thereabouts had been fired, and roughly ten minutes from the time of opening fire, the whole crowd had dispersed, and I was able to lead the body of troops back in security, having, as it turned out, established general security in Amritsar and the neighbourhood for everyone. The spirit of the organized mobs was effectively broken, and the unrest in the countryside stopped.

I reported my action to Divisional Headquarters next day, describing briefly the events above set out, and stated that I estimated the dead casualties at between 200 and 300. (Appendix C.) I received from the Divisional Commander by aeroplane the message, "Your action correct, and Lieutenant-Governor approves." (Appendix D.)

Subsequent enquiries, according to the Hunter Committee, put the number of dead at 379, but of such enquiries I have no information.

6. Connection between Amritsar and rest of Punjaub and Results of Firing.

Before discussing the above proceedings in relation to the adverse criticisms upon them, I would say a word as to the connection between the events in Amritsar and the rest of the Punjaub.

It was, as will be seen, very close. First, as to the rebellious movement itself. Before I left Jullundur I was well aware of the effect of the outrages of the 10th April in Amritsar upon the districts outside.

The Hunter Committee leaves no doubt as to the fatal progress of events. Of the situation at Lahore, which clearly became nearly as threatening as that at Amritsar, the Committee says "that on the 10th the political atmosphere, already highly charged, was made acutely worse by the arrival of two pieces of news, one the arrest of Mr. Gandhi, and the other the news of the horrible outbreak at Amritsar." (Report, page 35.)

A poster in the vernacular issued in Lahore exhorted imitation of Amritsar as follows. (Report, page 38.)

> "When the news (*i.e.*, of Mr. Gandhi's arrest) reached Amritsar, the Danda Fauj (Bludgeon Army) of the brave Sikhs set fire to the Bank, the Railway Station and Electric Power House. They cut the telegraph wires and removed the railway line. The Danda Fauj of Amritsar bravely killed a number of European monkeys and their Sikh regiments have revolted and deserted. O Hindu, Muhammedan and Sikh brethren enlist at once in the Danda Army and fight with bravery against the English monkeys. God will grant you victory. . . . "

Of Patti, a town in the Lahore district, and about 28 miles from Amritsar, the Committee find that :—

> "The news of the Amritsar disorders on the 10th disposed the Patti mob towards loot." (*Report*, page 42.)

The outbreak at Gujrianwala was clearly serious. Describing its progress, the Committee say :—

> "Until the news of the happenings of the 10th at Amritsar and Lahore had time to affect the people of Gujrianwala there seems to have been no intention to hold a second hartal. After that news Europeans and authorities were alike naturally apprehensive." . . . (*Report*, page 43.)

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and again :—

"The main object of the mob was certainly to destroy all Government buildings and there is little room for doubt that they were imitating or repeating what they heard of Amritsar on the 10th." (*Report*, page 45.)

and again :—

"At Sheikhupura on the 12th there were processions and excited speeches containing descriptions of the events at Lahore and Amritsar." . . . (*Report*, page 51.)

Next, as to the effect of my action in the Jallianwallah Bagh on the afternoon of the 13th.

The evidence as to this is copious and conclusive.

Of the effect in Amritsar itself, the evidence of Mr. Miles Irving leaves no room for doubt :—

"*Q.* What was the result of this firing on that mob?

"*A.* The whole rebellion collapsed. Not only the mob that was fired upon naturally dispersed and all trouble ceased in the city of Amritsar, but it was felt throughout the district. One of the reasons why there had been a danger was that the people not in the district thought for some reason or other that the Arm of Government was paralysed. The inaction of the police when the National Bank was burned lent some colour to that belief and there was an idea that the Government could do nothing, and this came as a disillusionment." (Page 7, Evidence, Vol. III.)

And Major-General Benyon in his report (page 322, Vol. IV., Evidence) says :—

"(iv.) The wisdom of General Dyer's action has been fully proved by the fact that there has been no further trouble of any sort in Amritsar. The news had a decidedly sobering effect on the surrounding villages when it spread to them."

With regard to the effect generally, Sir Michael O'Dwyer, the Lieutenant-Governor, whose judgment on such a matter was necessarily the best, stated :—

"I have no hesitation in saying that General Dyer's action that day was the decisive factor in crushing the rebellion, the seriousness of which is only now being realised." . . . (*Report*, page 31.)

The evidence of Lieutenant-Colonel Johnson, commanding the troops at Lahore who plainly had to face there a situation of the utmost gravity is exceptionally significant.

He told the Committee (at page 26 of Vol. IV. of the Evidence (Lahore and Kasur)):—

"*Q.* Therefore I think your opinion is that these were the very things which practically maintained peace and order—these Martial Law orders?

"*A.* I put four things forward why peace was maintained and bloodshed avoided. First of all about 60 per cent. I put to General Dyer's action at Amritsar; the next thing I put to the institution of Martial Law, the third thing, I had a sufficient number of troops placed at my disposal here, and the fourth—and a very minor consideration—was the use that one made of that power and those troops—

15 per cent. for the number of troops.
20 per cent. for Martial Law.
60 per cent. for General Dyer.
5 per cent. for the use made of powers and men.

Now General Dyer had proclaimed his own Martial Law which he was prepared to do. Whether Martial Law was proclaimed or not is a common factor.

"*Q.* You mean then that when the news of what had happened on the 13th at Amritsar arrived at Lahore the situation was eased and things were looking better?

"*A.* Yes, there was a change in the atmosphere.

"*Q.* Therefore, that was due to the action of General Dyer? May I know whether there was any opportunity for such communication between Amritsar and Lahore?

"*A.* I should think every means of communication barring the telegraph, motor bicycles, &c., I cannot imagine there would have been difficulty in the way of communication.

"*Q.* If you accept this proposition that what happened on the 13th would not reach Lahore—under the circumstances that were prevailing on the 14th—will you be prepared to modify your statement?

"*A.* It did reach Lahore on the 13th. It was common property late that night."

And General Beynon says (at page 325, Vol. IV., Evidence) :—

"The strong measures taken by General Dyer at Amritsar had a far-reaching effect and prevented any further trouble in the Lahore Divisional area."

On page 9 of their despatch the Government of India say :—

"It is more than probable that General Dyer's action so intimidated the lawless elements in the population of Amritsar and neighbouring districts of the central Punjaub as to prevent further manifestations of disorder" and

"we think that in the result his (General Dyer's) action at the time checked the spread of the disturbances to an extent which it is difficult now to estimate.

"This was the opinion of many intelligent observers in the Punjaub."

I will only remark here that I cannot understand how it can be suggested that the

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objects of crushing the rebellion in Amritsar or elsewhere, of diminishing the dangers in Lahore by 60 per cent., of intimidating the lawless elements in the population of Amritsar and neighbouring districts, and preventing further manifestations of disorder, and of checking the spread of disturbances were not proper objects upon which to employ a military force during a rebellion.

If they were proper objects, the Hunter Committee supply no evidence or arguments to show that I employed any more force than was necessary to secure them.

The whole gravamen of the Committee's case against me is indeed not that I used excessive force to secure these objects, but that they were not proper objects for me to endeavour to secure.

The Committee could hardly have ruled that the casualties were out of proportion to the general situation to be faced or to the actual results achieved, if once they were willing to assume that I was entitled to face the situation and to seek to achieve the results, when their own appreciation of that situation is considered:—

Page 63, Report.

"In the situation as it presented itself day by day to the Punjaub Government there were grounds for the gravest anxiety. Within recent years there had been two revolutionary movements, *i.e.*, the Ghadr movement and the Silk Letter Conspiracy of 1916. It was difficult, probably unsafe for the authorities not to assume that the outbreak was the result of a definite organization. Apart from the existence of any deeply laid scheme to overthrow the British, a movement which had started in rioting and become a rebellion might have rapidly developed into a revolution."

Page 66, Report.

"As a description of the occurrences to which we have called attention in our narrative of events, 'open rebellion' is, we think, apt and accurate; as a question of inference it appears to us to be the natural and the only inference. The element of rebellion as distinct from mere riot on the one hand and from political opposition to Government on the other can be traced throughout; in what sense it may be considered to lack openness we have failed to discover. . . . . .

". . . On 10th April at Amritsar the mobs had burned Government buildings because they were Government buildings. After the first few minutes they had murdered all Europeans on whom they could lay their hands, except Miss Sherwood, whom they left for dead upon the street. They had hunted for Mrs. Easdon and the officers of the Chartered Bank; the other bank managers were sought out in their offices and killed with every circumstance of brutal rage. They were not even Government officials. But the Raj is a British Raj; they were in some sense its representative or symbols, and for this they were murdered. The railway and the telegraphs were attacked partly as Government institutions and partly to paralyze Government by preventing news, by derailing troops, and otherwise immobilizing the forces.

"The Amritsar incidents may be regarded as the high water mark of the disorders though the outbreak at Kasur on the 12th is hardly distinguishable."

We know that the Secretary of State considers that the Committee's appreciation of the danger is, if anything, below the mark. Can it be suggested that the casualties caused by my action on the 13th April were out of proportion to the result—the suppression of such a rebellion?

7. Reply to Charge of Excessive Force and Explanation of Motives.

I will now proceed to deal briefly and directly with the Committee's criticisms and to explain, as clearly as I can, the precise motives of my action.

I say frankly at the outset that if the above described objects were not proper objects for me to seek in my action against the crowd in the Jallianwallah Bagh, then, on the major point, I may be open to criticism, and can only plead that I acted according to my best judgment under a mistaken sense of duty.

If these were right objects to pursue, I submit that, on the major point there is no case against me.

I put side by side an extract from my own report and the vital comment of the Committee.

Extract from my own Report.	*Comment of the Committee.*
"I fired and continued to fire until the crowd dispersed, and I consider this is the least amount of firing which would produce the necessary moral and widespread effect it was my duty to produce if I was to justify my action. If more troops had been at hand, the casualties would have been greater in proportion. It was no longer a question of merely dispersing the crowd, but one of producing a sufficient moral effect from a military point of view not only on those who were present, but more especially throughout the Punjaub. There could be no question of undue severity."	"In our view, this was unfortunately a mistaken conception of his duty. If necessary, a crowd that has assembled contrary to a proclamation issued to prevent or terminate disorder may have to be fired upon; but continued firing upon that crowd cannot be justified because of the effect such firing may have upon people in other places. The employment of excessive measures is as likely as not to produce the opposite result to that desired."

With the last sentence of the Committee's opinion no one will quarrel. The

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essential point, however, is that contained in the words, "continued firing upon that crowd cannot be justified because of the effect such firing may have upon people in other places." I believe the Army Council will repudiate with emphasis the principle involved in these words as being an abstract principle which cannot possibly govern the particular crisis with which I was confronted or any similar crisis.

The principle in the only sense in which it is relevant to or supports the criticism of my action comes to this—that my sole right was to secure the purely mechanical effect of causing the crowd to move off from the place where it was and go resolved into its individual elements to some other place or places. What it might do wherever it or its elements went was no concern of mine. The fact that it might go off full of derision and contempt of my force to burn and loot elsewhere, or to surround and overwhelm my troops as they moved out of the city, was not to influence my action at all. In fact, none of the possible consequences of leniency were to be considered at all.

I invite repudiation of this principle on three grounds (among others), first, that the Hunter Committee do not themselves adopt any such principle in dealing with other cases in their report; secondly, that the principle is repudiated by the Secretary of State for India, in his despatch; and thirdly, that the principle is wrong.

(*a.*) The recognition by the Committee itself in other cases that an officer when firing on a crowd may look beyond the needs of the movement is clear.

On page 1 of the report it is stated in regard to Delhi :—

> "firing continued no longer than was necessary to achieve the legitimate object of restoring order and preventing a disastrous outbreak of violence."

On page 16 of the same report the Committee say (with reference to Niagram in the Ahmedabad district) :—

> "the force used against the rioters . . . was certainly not excessive. If greater force could have been applied at an early stage, the commission of an atrocious murder and much destruction of property might have been prevented."

and on page 38 (with reference to the disorders at Lahore) :—

> "we think that it was essential on this day to disperse this crowd, and that it would have been the end of all chance to restore order in Lahore if the police and troops had left without dispersing it."

As regards Gujrianwala, the Committee clearly consider that the accident of the recent departure of the Deputy Commissioner (Colonel O'Brien) resulted in the situation being too weakly handled; on page 45 they say :—

> "in failing to order the police to fire upon and so disperse these mobs around the burning post office the acting Deputy Commissioner (at Gujrianwala) appears to us to have committed an error. If effective measures had then been taken to disperse the mob and restore order, the later incidents of the day might have been avoided."

It is, I think, a legitimate comment that officers who deal with disturbances in future are placed in a great difficulty by these different rulings. If they consider only the immediate needs of the moment, they are liable to be condemned for not looking further ahead and for ill consequences which occur elsewhere and later. If they do as I did and consider the situation as a whole and act with a view to restore order and to prevent further outbreaks, they are liable to be told that they must not look beyond the dispersal of the crowd at the moment.

(*b.*) The despatch of the Secretary of State gives no countenance to the view that I was required to look at events in isolation and disregard consequences in the action which I took.

> "They (His Majesty's Government) think it is possible that the danger to the lives of Europeans and to the safety of British and Indian troops was greater than appears from the Committee's report . . . [Then follows the passage about the conditions in Amritsar and the neighbourhood quoted in paragraph 5 above, and the despatch continues] : "In discharging this responsibility with the small force at his disposal, Brigadier-General Dyer naturally could not dismiss from his mind conditions in the Punjaub generally, and he was entitled to lay his plans with reference to those conditions." (*Despatch*, page 24.)

Apart from the question of principle now under discussion, which is here decided in my favour, I invite in passing special attention to the fact that in this passage the Secretary of State considers that the Hunter Committee also erred in their estimate of the magnitude and seriousness of the situation.

(*c*) Thirdly, I say that the basis of criticism adopted by the Committee is on the face of it wrong and contrary to common sense. An officer dealing with riots is bound to consider consequences, and if faced with a rebellious gathering to consider what may happen both then and thereafter, both in that place and any other places affected or likely to be affected by the same movement, according as he lets the gathering alone or

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disperses it, or according as he disperses it effectively or ineffectively, *e.g.*, leaving it with its defiance and designs unaffected, and its power for mischief unreduced. The measures he takes must depend on circumstances. Extreme dangers justify strong measures. He must in any case be largely judged by results.

To put an illustration: I conceive that an officer would be guilty of the greatest inhumanity, if in some district where order and security in general reigned beyond risk of disturbance, he fired upon a crowd which in a purely local and isolated disturbance required to be dispersed, and did not go to the extreme of leniency in consideration of surrounding circumstances, and of the fact that, breach of law though there might be, its consequences were not likely to be serious even if it were not checked or only very mildly checked. The converse I submit is equally true and indeed a platitude.

I submit, therefore, that the criticisms in the Hunter Report of the firing are vitiated by the false principle upon which they proceed.

The principle in question is false too in law. The rules regulating the action of the military during civil disorders, as stated in Chapter XIII. of the Manual of Military Law distinguish clearly three things (1) Unlawful Assembly; (2) Riot; (3) Insurrection.

It is conceded that I was faced not with unlawful assembly or riot, but with insurrection (open rebellion the Committee call it).

Mere dispersal is laid down as the proper course in a case of unlawful assembly only; of insurrection it is said (page 224)—

> "The existence of an armed insurrection would justify the use of any degree of force necessary effectually to meet and cope with the insurrection."

What the Hunter Committee have done is to apply the principles applicable to unlawful assembly in times of otherwise general peace and quiet to a vital incident of a rebellion.

The principle upon which they base their criticism of me is thus seen to be opposed both to common sense and to law.

Moreover, the comment of the Committee derives whatever plausibility it possesses from its ambiguity. The phrase "effect upon people in other places" raises the question, what people in what other places? The people I desired primarily to influence were the actual people on the spot. To my mind they were the same mob under the same leaders that had perpetrated outrages of the 10th, and were the disturbing force during the subsequent period, and constituted the danger for the future.

As to people in other places, I did not wish to influence people or places that were not affected or in danger of being affected by the rebellion, but only the people who were involved or were becoming involved in the same movement in the neighbourhood of Amritsar and in other places in the Punjaub.

I submit with confidence that this was not merely a proper, but an inevitable object of any action I had to take.

The following may be taken as a fair summary of the motives and grounds of my action:—

(*a.*) I had before me the general situation summarized in the despatch of the Secretary of State in the passage cited on paragraph 5 above, and all its attendant military dangers. In addition I knew of the cloud from Afghanistan, which broke three weeks later.

(*b.*) I had before me in the Jallianwallah Bagh not a fortuitous gathering, which at worst had assembled negligently or even recklessly contrary to a proclamation, but a mob that was there with express intent to challenge Government authority and defy me to take any effective action against it and in particular to defy me to fire upon it.

(*c.*) I knew that it was in substance the same mob that had been in course of organization for some days and had committed the hideous crimes of the 10th April, and was the power and authority which for two days had ruled the city in defiance of the Government. I had, in fact, the rebel army in front of me.

(*d.*) I knew, so far as human foresight could go, that if I shirked its challenge and did not then and there crush it, it would have succeeded in the design of its leaders, contempt and derision of Government power would have been complete, and that there would infallibly follow that night or next morning a general mob movement both from inside and outside Amritsar which would have destroyed all the European population, including women and children and all my troops, and involved in its ruin the law-abiding Indian population as well.

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(*e.*) I knew that this result would lead to a similar result in numerous places throughout the Punjaub.

(*f.*) I knew that ineffective action against the mob would gravely endanger my small force on the actual spot, and make its safe withdrawal difficult, and that its destruction would infallibly produce the results indicated in the last two paragraphs.

(*g.*) I knew that on the four occasions when firing took place on the 10th, in Amritsar, its effects in preventing disorder and restoring security had been quite ineffective, and that with the small body of troops at my disposal, and the large, determined and defiant assembly before me I could produce no sufficient effect except by continuous firing.

It is, of course, impossible for me to separate the effect of these various considerations, and say what I should have done if one or other had not been present, whether, *e.g.*, if Amritsar had been merely an isolated incident and not the storm centre of the Punjaub, or if the danger from the countryside, our constant pre-occupation, could have been ignored, I should have acted precisely as I did. I looked at the realities of the case as a whole, as a soldier was bound to do.

But if any one dominant motive can be extracted it was the determination to avert from the European women and children and those of the law-abiding Indian community the fate which I was convinced would be theirs, if I did not meet the challenge and produce the required effect to restore order and security. I am conscious that it was this motive which gave me the strength of will to carry out my duty. Of its force in the mind of an Indian Army officer of thirty-four years' residence in India I am sure the Army Council will have no doubt. The terms of the thanks which I afterwards received from so many Indians showed what a cloud of apprehension rested upon the minds not only of Europeans but of the law-abiding Indian population as a whole regarding the fate of their children and women-folk during those fateful days

Upon the above considerations, I submit that if my object be admitted to be a proper object, namely, the restoration of order and security, and if I was not confined to the bare mechanical operation of getting the crowd "to move on," then no evidence or ground is anywhere suggested to show that the force I used was in the least degree excessive. The Committee do not indeed anywhere attempt to show this, but base their disapproval substantially on the ground that I had no right to seek the general object of the restoration of order, but should have confined myself to the bare mechanical operation above mentioned.

Upon the assumption that I was justified in seeking the wider object, and in the absence of any ground shown for regarding my action as excessive upon that assumption, I will only allude to the adverse comments made in other parts of the Committee's report upon officer's who took insufficient action to secure the wider object of the restoration of order, and to the complete ineffectiveness of the measures taken in Amritsar on the 10th.

As regards the latter point the Adjutant-General speaking before the Legislative Council five months later, was quite clear :—

> "Now he (Brig.-General Dyer) was well aware of the events of 10th April when the murders of Europeans and the attacks on property had been made, and when the firing which had been employed to suppress these disorders had been totally inadequate."

I am not here reflecting upon the authorities in charge of Amritsar before my arrival on the evening of the 11th April. At the time of the firing in question, the nature and extent of the outrages were not known to them. But the results which appeared afterwards and were present to me on my arrival showed how ineffective the action taken had in fact been.

In the same connection I may quote the Committee's own comment on the firing by the small picket near the Hall Bridge on the 10th April :—

> "It angered some, and as an incitement it might well be effective with others." (*Report*, page 26.)

In point of fact, after this first firing, the crowd merely withdrew from the point assailed, and proceeded to attack and smash up the telegraph office, and attempt the murder of the telegraph master, who was rescued only at the last moment by the station picket (Report, page 25).

As to the grounds for regarding the crowd upon which I fired as being a rebellious mob and not an innocent political assembly, some further remarks important to my defence will be found in paragraphs 8 and 9 below, where I deal directly with the suggestion that it was largely composed of innocent people.

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To sum up, I respectfully submit—

(1.) That the object which I sought was a right object.
(2.) That the force I used was not excessive for the purpose.
(3.) That, as the result showed, it did achieve the effect desired; and
(4.) That no less force on that occasion would have achieved that effect.

8. Points as to Publicity of Proclamation and lack of Warning to Crowd.

It will be convenient that I should deal separately with two subsidiary points which arise in connection with my action in dispersing the mob on the 13th and have been made the subject of criticism:—

(*a.*) That I did not cause my proclamation in the early part of the day to be sufficiently published;
(*b.*) That I failed to give a further warning to the crowd before I actually caused fire to be opened upon it.

I think that I am justified in saying that neither the Hunter Committee nor the Government of India regard either of these points as involving questions of much practical moment, and I believe their importance will be found to lie in the inference which the Secretary of State has allowed himself to draw from them, inferences which I respectfully submit will be found on further consideration to involve a substantial misunderstanding of the facts.

(*a*) As regards the publication of the proclamation, the Committee do not allege that the proclamation was not advertised as widely as was reasonably possible, and consider that most of those who were present at the meeting were aware of it. They say (page 30, Report)—

> "the majority of the people who assembled had done so in direct defiance of a proclamation issued in the interests of peace and order, many thinking that the reference to firing was mere bluff."

The Government of India say (at page 8 of their Despatch) that

> "it cannot therefore be doubted that most of the residents of Amritsar present at the meeting were aware of the orders and collected in defiance of them."

The Secretary of State also does not appear, in the first instance, to attach much importance to this point taken by itself as he says (at page 24 of his Despatch)—

> "It would be unfair, considering the state of the city, the heat of the weather and the strain to which the troops . . . have been subjected . . . to lay too great stress upon this point" (namely, that the proclamation was published in a portion of the city only).

I trust that the account I have already given and the comments I have already made on the situation will make it clear that I, at the moment of action, entertained the belief and had proper ground for believing that substantially everyone in the crowd knew that he had assembled in defiance of orders issued, and was there with a defiant and revolutionary intent. At the risk of some repetition I will emphasize a few grounds for this belief.

The general understanding in India that in times of riot crowds are not allowed to assemble must itself not be left out of account.

Next, quite apart from my own proclamation, the orders of the authorities had been clearly indicated throughout the two preceding days when crowds had been repeatedly ordered to disperse. This happened several times during the 12th, when, as the Adjutant-General afterwards said, I should have been justified in firing, but I refrained from doing so.

Moreover my proclamation of the 13th was not the only one. A previous proclamation prohibiting assemblies and declaring that all gatherings would be fired on had been drawn up by the Deputy Commissioner and issued on the 11th April by being given to a number of citizens to be published as best they could, and on the 12th I caused another to be issued by the police.

With regard to the actual issue of my own proclamation on the 13th, the evidence of the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Miles Irving (page 7, Vol. 3 of the Evidence) shows what happened. From 9 a.m. to about 1.30 p.m. I led a column through the streets of the city, accompanied by him. The column was halted at about 18 distinct places where drums were beat in order to collect the people and where the proclamation was read after people had collected. The proclamation was read out in the official Urdu language and also explained in Punjabee language to the common people. That it was heard by and known to the riotous element in the city was shown by their immediate

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issue of a counter proclamation, the effect of which was to publish my proclamation still further. The Deputy Superintendent of Police, Mr. Plomer, says (page 26, Vol. III., Evidence) that, after I had made my proclamation, three persons went round beating an empty Kerosene tin announcing that the meeting would be held in the Jallianwallah Bagh, in deliberate defiance of my order.

I need scarcely say that the mere procession of a body of troops round the city accompanied by the General himself and the Deputy Commissioner would be a demonstration of unusual significance and attracting general attention.

Lastly, while I throughout this difficult business have done my best to keep my own responsibility to the fore, I had to follow, as regards the places where the proclamation should be published, the guidance of the local official who knew the city of Amritsar, with which I personally was little acquainted.

News travels with the utmost quickness in a place like Amritsar and the surrounding neighbourhood, and speaking from my 34 years of experience, I have no hesitation in saying that the order against crowds and the threat to fire was as well known as anything could have made them by the afternoon.

(*b.*) With regard to the criticism that I failed to warn the crowd before firing, it is to be noticed that the Hunter Committee concede (page 30, Report) that a particular military situation (*e.g.*, the risk of a small force of soldiers being overwhelmed by a threatening mob) may justify firing without the formality of giving a notice to disperse being observed, and that the only person who can judge whether or not such an emergency has arisen is the officer in command of the troops. As I said in my report to my divisional commander (page 327, Vol. IV. Evidence), I realized that my force was small and untrained, and that to hesitate might induce attack, and if I had reasonable grounds for my view I am brought within the reservation made by the Committee. But, apart from the imminent danger it was, in my view, futile and unnecessary to address the crowd because I was satisfied that it was a rebellious gathering, and knew of the proclamations that had been issued and had assembled in defiance of them, and that no warning would induce them to disperse. The actual approach of the troops, a comparatively slow process, must obviously have been heralded to the crowd by runners, and thereby itself operated as a warning. The Committee take the view (page 30, report) that

> "it is distinctly improbable . . . . that the crowd . . . . would have dispersed upon notice being made that they should do so, and much more likely that recourse to firing would have been necessary to secure obedience to the proclamation."

And the Government, India (at page 8 of their Despatch) say that—

> ". . . . in view of this circumstance (the smallness of my force) and the previous successes of the forces of disorder, it is most improbable that an excited and defiant mob would have dispersed on a mere warning."

The facts already stated with regard to the publication of the proclamation and the other warnings issued against meetings, and what I myself saw of the character of the crowd with no women or children in it, were sufficient to convince me of the utter futility of any further proclamation. That it was guided and addressed by criminal revolutionaries I felt sure, and events have proved that I was right. Quite apart from the military danger to which I have alluded, the spectacle of this dense crowd under such circumstances and listening to such speakers was enough to convince anyone on the spot that further warning was not a practical requirement of the situation.

I can see now that, if I had been thinking of protecting myself from subsequent attacks, I might have given more attention to the matter, but the needs of the immediate situation and not protecting myself from subsequent criticisms were my guide.

9. Crowd not innocent as suggested by Secretary of State.

I think that the real importance to my case of the two foregoing matters lies in the indirect influence they have had upon the Secretary of State.

After referring at a later stage of his Despatch to my omission to give warning before actually ordering fire to be opened as being inexcusable, he concludes his comment :—

> "But he was not entitled to select for condign punishment an unarmed crowd, which, when he inflicted that punishment, had committed no act of violence, had made no attempt to oppose him by force, and many members of which must have been unaware that they were disobeying his commands." (*Despatch*, page 24.)

The ground of criticism here is changed. The principle of the Hunter Committee that I was not entitled to look beyond the needs of the moment and the mere removal

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of the crowd from the Bagh has (as already explained) been discarded. With the different principle embodied on the above comment I respectfully concur. To produce the impression upon a rebellious population required to restore order by deliberately firing upon an innocent gathering would have been indefensible.

Such an idea never entered into my head. What I have already said will, I trust, make clear that I was faced with no such gathering, but with a defiant, organized, and rebellious mob, with a record of at least two days of outrage and treason behind it and the above vital comment of the Secretary of State is based upon imperfect information as to the facts. The Government of India certainly do not take his view of the facts, as they speak in the extract above recited of "an excited and defiant mob."

I am inclined to think it is possible that the Minority Report has had some influence here. Their expert prosecution of me, facilitated by the absence of any expert defence, I have already mentioned. The skilful extraction of passages from my evidence to be used against me, the reference to "people of the mentality of General Dyer" and the conclusion directed both against Sir Michael O'Dwyer as well as myself that "there was no rebellion which required to be crushed" (page 115 of Minority Report) show the nature of the hostility with which, for the first time after months of official approval or exoneration, I found myself faced.

I should make this statement too long if I were to go through this Minority Report and deal with its various charges, and I have not attempted to do so. But I am compelled to mention it here, as it is possible that it is to some extent reflected in the present criticism with which I am dealing. I notice in particular the phrase "indiscriminate killing of innocent people not engaged in committing any acts of violence" (Minority Report, page 115). One of the Minority, in a question to a witness, even described the meeting as a "lecture" (Evidence, Vol. III., page 37).

I have said, I trust, enough to show the absurdity of the view that I was faced with an ordinary political assembly composed of non-criminal elements. But, in view of the apparent adoption by the Secretary of State of this "innocent" theory, I may be allowed to deal with two further points in connection with it.

The presence in the crowd of villagers from outside the city appears to be thought important, as showing that people to whom the proclamation had not been read were involved.

So far as the question of knowledge is concerned, I submit, on the facts previously stated, that there would be a general knowledge throughout Amritsar and all natives visiting it that meetings were prohibited.

So far as the question of motive is concerned, the presence of the villagers only made the matter more sinister. I was aware that the day was one of a fair and a festival. I was aware, too, of the continued efforts of the agitators beneath the surface to bring the villages into the rebellion. It was here that the worst danger really lay. Even if they came into the city with innocent motives, they would find it seething with the murderous triumphs and treasonable defiance of the two previous days. But there was only too much reason to fear that they would come with no innocent motive and Sikh looters from without would have been infinitely more dangerous than the city mob. The Deputy-Commissioner (Mr. Irving) gave significant evidence on this side of the matter:—

> "*Q.* Then on the 13th, the situation continued critical?
>
> "*A.* It continued very critical. We were able to hold the outskirts of the city. We made no impression in the city. The city was still impenitently hostile and that was not the worst, because the great danger was from the outside. If the villagers of the Manjha had turned loose, we should have had a situation not paralleled since the Mutiny. We know them to be hot-headed men, who, if they thought that the Government was failing, would step in for anything they could get.
>
> "*Q.* Can you say yourself whether any rumours were afloat as regards general looting?
>
> "*A.* I was informed that the rumour in the villages was that there was any amount of loot in Amritsar. Government was failing in the control of the situation and the sooner people came in to get their share, the better. It was brought out in evidence that in certain villages people went off to get their share.
>
> "*Q.* Did you form any opinion whether there was any foundation for these rumours?
>
> "*A.* I thought them very probable. I received a circumstantial story of a large party of villagers on the 12th and 13th about 3 miles from Amritsar and I thought it extremely likely that we should have some looting." (Evidence, Vol. III., page 6.)

Reports to the above effect were constantly coming to me, and the concerted attack on railway communications were further indications of the danger from outside. We found evidence afterwards that loot from the Banks had been taken out to the villages to demonstrate that the Raj had fallen and that the villages should rise and get their share.

There could be no reasonable doubt in my mind that any villagers in the meeting

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were there as sympathizers and adherents of the insurrection. I do not say that it was physically impossible for the crowd to have contained people who had not heard my own particular proclamation, and as I told the Committee (in my answer of which the Minority characteristically seize hold) there may conceivably have been many. I did not in fact believe there were, and I was, and am, convinced that substantially the whole crowd knew they were there in defiance of the authorities and in furtherance of the disorders.

The second point I wish to emphasize is the confirmation through the subsequent trials of offenders of my judgment, formed on the spot, that the meeting was engaged in listening to seditious harangues. Almost every speaker was a person who was afterwards convicted of sedition or had a warrant out against him. One was a man who is believed to have been the actual murderer of Mr. Scott. Is it possible, in view of this fact (which does not appear to have been before any of the authorities who have judged me), to doubt that my instinct and information were right, and that it was no innocent gathering, but a seditious and defiant mob?

10. Explanation of Order Closing the Street where Miss Sherwood was Assaulted.

The criticims of my order issued on the 21st April prohibiting the use of the street where Miss Sherwood was attacked involves a matter quite separate from my action on the 13th in suppressing the revolt. It has been much misrepresented, and a short statement will, I hope, make clear its true nature. The order was only in force for a short time, and affected but a comparatively few people, and would not, I think, have been made so much of, but for the agitation against me for my suppression of the rising itself. It will be enough for me to explain my reasons and to submit that they were sufficient to exonerate me from any charge of military misconduct.

The attempted murder of Miss Sherwood was probably the most dastardly outrage in the whole rebellion. The fact that it was not murder was merely because her assailants made a mistake in thinking that they had completed their work. The door of a house in the street in question to which she fled after the first assault for protection, was slammed in her face, and after being again assaulted and beaten she was left for dead by the mob.

On the 21st April I closed this street during the daytime by putting a picket at each end, and ordered that no native should pass down it except on all fours. The order was not of course meant to be in any sense a permanent order, and the picket was only there for 12 hours in the daytime. It is a complete misunderstanding to suppose that I meant this order to be an insulting mark of race inferiority. The order meant that the street should be regarded as holy ground, and that, to mark this fact, no one was to traverse it except in a manner in which a place of special sanctity might naturally in the East be traversed. My object was not merely to impress the inhabitants, but to appeal to their moral sense in a way which I knew they would understand. It is a small point, but in fact "crawling order" is a misnomer; the order was to go on all fours in an attitude well understood by natives of India in relation to holy places.

I repeat what I said to the Committee that I had no conception that anybody would in fact use the street at all and, as is conceded by the Committee, hardly any people did so. A most trivial accident has been made use of in the Minority Report to misrepresent my action. Immediately after placing the picquets on the street I had gone into the city with a party of British soldiers and had occasion while there to order the arrest of some men and send them back to the camp under escort. The non-commissioned officer with me and the British escort who took them back did not know the city and naturally went back by the way they came. When they arrived at the street the picquet strictly enforcing the order compelled the prisoners to go down it on all fours. I am of course responsible for this, but it was a pure accident and quite contrary to my intention.

It is very easy for a minor incident like this order, given in the circumstances in which it was given when the feelings of horror were strong upon everybody, to be misrepresented in quiet times by people at a great distance, and I am entitled to cite the judgment of the Adjutant-General of India five months after the event as a fair account of my motives and as containing an official view of my case which should exonerate me from censure for action taken according to the best of my judgment.

The Adjutant-General, after describing the attempted murder of Miss Sherwood

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and mentioning that an important political body had misrepresented it as being a "petty assault on a woman," proceeds as follows :—

"I feel sure that the Council will agee that it is not surprising that the Officer in Command took the view that some unusual measures were necessary to bring home to the mob that such acts of violence directed against defenceless women could not be tolerated. Something was required to strike the imagination and impress on all the determination of the military authorities to protect European women. This Council can readily understand how easily the feelings of soldiers would be outraged by acts of this nature and that they might be led to uncontrolled reprisals. Incidentally it is worthy of note in this connection that we have no charge against any of our soldiers during this rebellion. It is easy, my Lord, to criticise the orders issued by the officer in command at Amritsar, but the circumstances were altogether exceptional and the punishment, though humiliating, was not such as to cause danger to life or physical hurt. Except on one occasion when a body of prisoners were brought down the street in which Miss Sherwood had been assaulted, no compulsion was brought to bear on any individual to submit to the order. The order remained in force for a period of five days and there is good reason for the belief that, except for the party of prisoners already mentioned, those who were subjected to the order came voluntarily to submit to it for the sake of notoriety or martyrdom. One man after going down the street on his hands and knees three times had to be stopped giving further exhibitions.

"My Lord, the order was of course an unusual one and not one which might have been considered necessary by other officers in like circumstances. The officer in command at Amritsar will doubtless be prepared to justify his action should be called upon to do so."

11. Charge of undue Neglect of Wounded.

Another subsidiary point of criticism is that I omitted to provide help for the wounded after the dispersal of the crowd. The Hunter Committee do not make this criticism. They appear to consider (page 31, Report) that, in view of the size of my force, I acted right in withdrawing at once to the Ram Bagh, and they say that it had not been proved to them that any wounded people were in fact exposed to unnecessary suffering from want of medical treatment. The Government of India in their Despatch do not blame me for this omission, but merely express regret (page 9) that no action was taken either by the civil or military authorities to remove the dead or give aid to the wounded. But the Secretary of State (at page 24 of his Despatch) is more severe and says :—

"that Brigadier-General Dyer should have taken no steps to see that some attempt was made to give medical assistance to the dying and wounded was an omission from his obvious duty."

I cannot help thinking that this criticism is really based on the misapprehension of fact to which I have already alluded, namely, that the casualties had occurred in a comparatively innocent gathering, and, as a whole, deserved the care of the authorities in the same way as would innocent sufferers in some big accident such as a flood or an earthquake during time otherwise peaceful. To succour any such innocent sufferers I should certainly have been prepared to make the utmost exertions and to take great risks. But in the actual circumstances of the case, I respectfully submit that the Hunter Committee were right to withhold adverse comment, and that it was not possible for me to use my small and hard-worked force for this purpose and that military consideration justified my action in withdrawing it at once to may headquarters. We had no field dressings with us. No medical officer could have lived in the city for an instant without a strong escort, and in my judgment none could be then spared. There is indeed no evidence to support the Secretary of State's apparent view that no assistance was given to the wounded by anyone. The hospitals were open and the Indian medical officers were there. Help from that quarter was available if asked for, and, as the Committee find, there was no evidence that unnecessary suffering had been caused to the wounded (page 21). I submit that there is no case whatever against me of any neglect of duty in regard to the wounded, and I venture to suggest that the criticism proceeds upon the assumption that the original firing was unnecessary and inhumane, the inference being that the failure to succour the innocent sufferers was equally inhumane.

I must add, in view of rumours which have come to my notice, that it is untrue that I issued orders that none of the wounded were to be attended to in hospital.

12. Summary of Military Considerations.

Avoiding, so far as possible, repetition on what has already been narrated I summarize below the military situation as it appeared to me :—

(*a.*) The whole situation in Amritsar was primarily military. The civil authorities had already resigned power to Major Macdonald before I arrived.

(*b.*) The local tactical situation was hopless unless a vigorous front was maintained and the initiative preserved throughout.

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I had at the time about 407 British and 739 Indian troops, many of them only partially trained men in a city of 150,000 inflamed with criminal excesses and virtual immunity from authority, and a dense warlike population in the countryside ready to break into looting and disorder as soon as the news that the Raj had gone under went round.

The force was necessarily inadequate for anything but the bare protection of the civil lines, a few patrols, and guards at the nearest vital points. The railway as a whole, the city itself and the surrounding countryside had to be practically ignored so long as we remained on the defensive.

Had the city mob and the Manjha Sikhs joined hands, as assuredly they would soon have done, the troops and the civil lines would have been taken.

(*c.*) There were, among the Sikhs, some thousands of returned Ghadr revolutionaries and a vast number of demobilized soldiers; the latter would have been most formidable had their loyalty become affected in the general disappearance of Government authority.

(*d.*) The railway was vital. The Punjaub has only one main railway line which passes over six large rivers. Communication with the North-West Frontier is entirely dependent on this line. Early in 1919, I made plans for the disposition of my troops in the event of a rising, and had taken special steps in order to keep the bridge-heads in my area clear.

There were many lesser bridges of military importance.

It was impossible during the rising to find guards for all these vital points for want of troops. The report of the Committee and the map annexed thereto provide ample material to show that the destruction of communications was carried out methodically and with concerted action.

(*e.*) I was alive to the situation on the frontier of Afghanistan. It is more than possible that the rising in Amritsar was precipitated by the action of the authorities in arresting the two chief agitators on the 10th. Had it been delayed four weeks it would have coincided with and paralysed the mobilization and concentration of the army for the work on the frontier.

(*f.*) I knew that attempts were being made to seduce my troops, and rumours came to me of similar attempts elsewhere.

(*g.*) The general military situation was grave. It is summarized in the passage from the evidence of Sir Michael O'Dwyer set out in the Committee's Report (page 73).

His is not a soldier's opinion, but it is plainly based on military reports and coincides with the information I had in April, 1919. The Army Council will be in possession of all the reports on these facts, and will no doubt refer to them for corroboration.

With the foregoing considerations before me and the daily reports and sights of Amritsar itself, I had no doubt that I was dealing with no mere local disturbance but a rebellion, which, whatever its origin, was aiming at something wide reaching and vastly more serious even than local riots and looting. The isolation of centres and the holding up of the movement of military reserves by destroying communications were essential features of the conspiracy.

I was conscious of a great offensive movement gathering against me, and knew that to sit still and await its complete mobilization would be fatal. When, therefore, the express challenge by this movement in the shape of the assembly in the Jallianwallah Bagh came to me, I knew that a military crisis had come, and that to view the assembly as a mere political gathering, requiring simply to be induced to go away because it was there in breach of an order, was wholly remote from the facts and the necessities of the case.

Amritsar was in fact the storm centre of a rebellion. The whole Punjaub had its eyes on Amritsar, and the assembly of the crowd that afternoon was for all practical purposes a declaration of war by leaders whose hope and belief was that I should fail to take up the challenge.

13. Approval and Exoneration by Authorities.

I must now direct attention to the way my case was treated by my superiors, both military and civil, from the date of the occurrence in April, 1919, till 22nd March, 1920, the first date when any official disapproval or censure was conveyed to me.

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I submit that according to all military rule and precedent this treatment amounts to an exoneration which it is not now open to reverse.

The normal course of dealing with an officer whose conduct in an important matter is considered questionable, is, as is well known, to hold a Court of Enquiry and in the meantime to suspend him from his duties. No such action was taken in my case; and the following synopsis of events shows clearly the opposite nature of the course that was adopted:—

(*a.*) On 14th April, 1919, I reported the firing in the Bagh to Divisional Headquarters in the Report B. 21. (Appendix C.)

(*b.*) On the next day, or the day following, my Divisional Commander, Major-General Beynon, conveyed to me his approval. (Appendix D.)

(*c.*) The Lieutenant-Governor about the same time agreed with the Divisional Commander (*see* terms of telegram).

(*d.*) On the 21st April, with the concurrence of the authorities, I went on a special mission to the Sikhs.

(*e.*) On 8th May, 1919, I was sent on active service in command of my Brigade to the frontier.

(*f.*) On about the 28th May, 1919, I was detailed to organize a force for the relief of Thal then invested by the Afghan Army. On this occasion I had an interview with General Sir Arthur Barrett, commanding at Peshawur. I had by then become aware that the influences which had inspired the rebellion were starting an agitation against those who had suppressed it.

Sir A. Barrett told me he wanted me to take command of the relief force. I told him that I wished, if possible, to be free from any anxiety about my action at Amritsar, which so far had been approved. He said: "That's all right, you would have heard about it long before this, if your action had not been approved." I give his precise words as nearly as I can.

(*g.*) About the end of July, 1919, I saw the Commander-in-Chief. He congratulated me on the relief of Thal. He said no word to me of censure about Amritsar, but merely ordered me to write a report on it, which I did. This report is dated the 25th August, 1919 (Vol. III., Evidence, page 201).

(*h.*) On 5th September, 1919, Major-General Beynon in his report on the rebellion made to Army Headquarters repeated his previous approval of my action, and added a testimony to my other services in connection with the rebellion.

"The wisdom of General Dyer's action has been fully proved by the fact that there has been no further trouble at Amritsar." (Evidence, Vol. IV., page 322.)

and later—

"The strong measures taken by General Dyer at Amritsar had a far reaching effect and prevented any further trouble in the Lahore Divisional Area. His knowledge of the Indian and his popularity with the Sikhs did much to restore confidence and loyalty in the surrounding districts." (Evidence, Vol. IV., page 325.)

(*i.*) On the 19th September, 1919, the Adjutant-General of India, who must clearly have had my report of 25th August, made a speech to the Legislative Council in which he reviewed the whole of my action. I annex a copy of the relevant part of his remarks as reported in the Official Report, as I regard his utterances, taken with what had already happened and in view of his position of Chief Staff Officer for disciplinary purposes in the Indian Army, as a complete exoneration of me and as conclusive against any further steps against me in the way of censure or penalty. (Appendix B.)

(*j.*) About October, 1919, I was promoted by being given permanent command of a Brigade.

(*k.*) On the 30th January, 1920, I was appointed to the temporary command of the Division, though owing to my illness which had been developing for some time, I never took up the appointment.

It was not till the 22nd March, 1920, that I was first told that my action at Amritsar was not approved, and that I was required to resign my appointment. This was at an interview with the Adjutant-General at Delhi, and the ground given was merely that the Hunter Committee had reported adversely to me. My evidence before the Committee was given on 19th November, 1919, and it will be appreciated from the above recital of events that it was not as a person on his defence that I came before it.

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I submit with confidence that any penalizing action or censure after all the above incidents, involving as they do a long series of acts of express or tacit exoneration, will be contrary to the most elementary principles of military justice and discipline. I fully admit the right and power of the Commander-in-Chief to remove any officer who he considers cannot usefully be further employed in a particular appointment. The exercise of a discretion in this regard need not, however, be made an occasion of censure, and in my case, I submit for the reasons stated, it cannot properly be so made.

14. Protest against Charges of Inhumanity and Loss of Nerve and Evidence of Character.

The Hunter Report acknowledges (and the Government of India and the Secretary of State concur) that I acted at Amritsar solely from a sense of duty and in the honest belief that I was carrying out my duty. A grave injustice is, however, done to me by the lack of any acknowledgment that I was possessed of any feelings of humanity or regard for human life. The lack of such acknowledgment, combined with the clear accusations made against me in the Minority Report of Prussian brutality and indifference to innocent suffering when in pursuit of military security has greatly prejudiced my case.

It is hardly possible that this prejudice would have arisen had I been accorded a proper warning of the case against me, and the usual facilities for defence, when evidence of my previous reputation and of surrounding circumstances could have been adduced to refute such calumnies. Some short allusion to these matters here is necessary in view of the neglect of them in the report.

My 34 years' service in India, during which I had reached the rank of Brigadier, and had received satisfactory reports throughout, should by itself be some testimony to my character in this regard.

Shortly prior to the events at Amritsar I had been called upon elsewhere in the neighbourhood on three separate occasions to deal with outbreaks and disturbances which were all in a sense forerunners of the rebellion. I referred to these occasions briefly in my official report to my military superior of the 26th August, 1919 (Evidence, Vol. III., page 201), and will not now repeat the details. While I claim no credit for my success in dealing with these minor crises after others had failed, I am entitled to insist that in the presence of mutiny and defiance of law I did not fire a single shot or use any violent or coercive method, I caused no loss of life, and I restored order by the arts of leadership and conciliation. It was from such recent successes and with such a record that I came to Amritsar on the night of 11th April.

During the 12th April I took no sort of offensive action against the city, though, as is conceded it was in a state of rebellion, hideous crimes had been perpetrated, and grave outbreaks were to be apprehended for the future. "Prussian methods" would have been easy; the city, in which admittedly Government rule had ceased and the mob was supreme, could have been bombed from aeroplanes (one was at my disposal) and bombarded by artillery, while offensive infantry action against the population could have been taken in detail with possibly advantageous results from a purely military standpoint. The Adjutant-General of India himself has referred to my policy of patience and conciliation on this day.

I claim no credit for an abstention which was my plain duty. But I am entitled to cite my conduct and record in such matters as some refutation of the charges of inhumanity levelled against me.

I can cite, for the same purpose, and indeed may be allowed to claim some credit for my pacification of the surrounding districts after the 21st April. The report itself makes plain the grave pre-occupation which the countryside and the Sikh population was to us during these critical days. I toured it with all the energy of which I was capable on the 21st April and succeeding days. I did not fire a shot or use any coercive measures against the population; I merely displayed my escort and used all the personal influence and diplomacy of which I was capable, getting hold of the leading men, appealing to them and reasoning with them, and thereby calming the spirit of unrest and insubordination that had been spreading from the city.

Of my personal success in this direction, I mention as proof, the fact that when, a fortnight or so later, the news of the Afghan attack filtered through to us, the leading men from the district came forward to me and offered me 10,000 Sikhs to fight for the Raj, and invited me to command them. I and my Brigade-Major received the unusual honour of being made Sikhs, and I was acclaimed on various occasions by native gatherings as the officer who had saved the situation. My Divisional Commander referred specially to the success of this mission in his despatch of the 5th September, 1919 (quoted in paragraph 13 above).

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The Hunter Report would have provided more complete material for judging my conduct had it taken some express note of the foregoing matters.

The danger of injustice to me would have been still further diminished if some express reference had been made to what I told the Committee as to my own feelings about the firing on the crowd. I said then, and I say now, that the duty was a horrible duty, which I performed with dislike and distaste amounting to horror. I was sure of my duty as I approached the scene with my small body of troops; I was doubtful of my resolution to overcome my feelings and carry out my duty. The motives which inspired me I have already explained. I refer here to these matters of sentiment because the calumnies against my sense of humanity call for a reply in the absence of any protection afforded me by the Committee.

I am entitled further to ask that consideration should be given to all matters in my record which bear upon my character as a soldier, so far as they are relevant to this case.

My general record will be in possession of the War Office and I need not allude to it.

The incident of the relief of Thal will form a part of that record. I only mention the incident here because it occurred after the events at Amritsar, and helps to show that my faculties were alive and in good order and makes it unlikely that I am open to a charge of having lacked nerve or lost my head on the earlier occasion. For this purpose I include here the message I received from the Commander-in-Chief as showing that at that time my judgment and capacity were unimpaired :—

[Copy of a letter No. 0/1118/695, dated the 21st June, 1919, from the Brigadier-General General Staff, North-West Frontier Force, to the 16th Indian Division.]

"The following remarks by His Excellency, the Commander-in-Chief, with reference to the recent operations at Thal, are forwarded for communication to Brig.-General R. E. H. Dyer, C.B. :—

"'The efforts made by Brig.-General Dyer from the time he arrived at Kohat were attended with full energy and competence. The manner in which he disposed of his troops, the full use he made of his artillery, the ardour he infused into his troops, denoted the hand of a Commander confident in his capacity and in his troops.

"'Brig.-General Dyer in this episode has given further evidence of power of Command.

'Signed BRUCE HAY, *Lt.-Col., G.S.*,
for Brig.-General, General Staff,
N.W.F. Force.'"

It is necessary for me in this connection to say that it is untrue that I caused my party in the Jallianwallah Bagh to fire all its ammunition; I did not forget elementary musketry principles, and duly took care that a reserve of rounds was preserved sufficient for the extrication of the force, and subsequent emergencies. I do not follow the observation in the Secretary of State's despatch "until his ammunition supply was at the point of exhaustion."

The foregoing narrative and explanations sufficiently show that I neither lost my head, nor acted in any spirit of inhumanity.

SUMMARY OF CONTENTIONS AND CONCLUSION.

I have dealt in the foregoing paragraphs as briefly as possible with the mass of evidence and comment regarding my case contained in the Bluebooks. To attempt to cite all the relevant passages from the evidence and reports would obviously have been neither convenient nor practicable in a written statement, and I have confined myself to a few citations for the purpose of illustration only. If any points are considered not to have been sufficiently dealt with or any matters of doubt are found to arise as to which the Army Council desire further explanation, I request that Counsel may be heard orally on my behalf. I am advised that the whole case is one which can be more suitably dealt with by an oral argument, and as Counsel have already, in effect, been heard against me, it is only fair that I should not be condemned until I have had a similar advantage in making my defence. The Hunter Committee failed altogether to consider many points and much evidence which, had I been on my defence with properly formulated charges and expert assistance, would have been

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presented to it. Sir Michael O'Dwyer, who has more knowledge than anyone else of events in the Punjaub has, he informs me, kindly offered to give the Army Council any information they may require, and I trust that, if necessary, they will avail themselves of this offer.

But I contend that I have said enough to show that upon the principal points of criticism I was justified in what I did, and that the circumstances required that I should act as I did.

In any case, I contend that I have abundantly shown, what alone it was necessary for me to show, that upon the facts before me and in the circumstances in which I was placed, I acted in good faith and had reasonable ground for my action.

I contend for these reasons that I should be finally exonerated from blame, and that all action of a penalizing character against me should be cancelled. As already stated I do not question the right of the Commander-in-Chief in India not to continue an officer in an appointment, if he considers that his employment therein is likely to prove an embarrassment to the authorities civil or military. But the exercise of such right need not invole censure or blame, and for censure or blame I submit there is in my case no ground.

The consistent course of official approval or exoneration to which I have called attention, and the irregularity so contrary to military law and so prejudicial to myself, with which my case was subsequently investigated are, I submit, obstacles prohibitive of all such censure or penalizing action.

My general record for restraint, discretion, and decision during the rebellion and the actual services which I rendered in suppressing it in the most critical locality of the whole situation, and by my successful mission to the Sikhs should further be given proper weight.

The charges of inhumanity are, I submit, baseless, and I request that I may receive an explicit assurance that my character is regarded as completely from stain on this score.

Finally, I am confident that the Army Council in judging my conduct in an emergency, as critical as it was novel, will not fail to consider the responsibility which rested upon me and the possible consequences to the whole fabric of government in the Punjaub, had I failed in energy and determination, and I claim to be entitled to the full countenance and support which was promised by the Government of India, when faced with the outbreak, to all officers engaged in the onerous duty of suppressing it.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

R. E. H. DYER,

Brigadier-General, Indian Army.

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APPENDICES.

APPENDIX A.

REPORT OF CAPTAIN F. C. BRIGGS, D.S.O

PUNJAUB DISTURBANCES.

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE by Captain F. C. C. Briggs, D.S.O., "The King's Regiment," Brigade-Major 45th Infantry Brigade, who was present at Amritsar from 11th April to 8th May, 1919, as Brigade-Major to Brigadier-General R. E. Dyer, C.B.

On or about 5th April, 1919, a code message was received from 16th Divisional Headquarters, Lahore, informing us that there might possibly be some trouble over the Rowlatt Act on 6th April, and to get into touch with the civil authorities. The message ended up with "special precautions Amritsar." By this message, I was not sure whether Division had given special instructions to Amritsar, or meant that we were to give them. I therefore sent a code message to Amritsar and asked if Division has issued them any special instructions. I got an answer back to say that they had received no instructions, but they were in close touch with the civil authorities and were aware of the possibility of trouble.

On the same day, a message was received from Division ordering us to send 1 Indian officer and 20 Sepoys to Amritsar as railway station piquet. This piquet was sent at once and was posted at the railway station by Captain Massey, 1st Garrison Battalion Somerset Light Infantry, who was officer commanding Amritsar.

General Dyer commanding the brigade was away at Delhi at the time, and Lieut.-Colonel Hynes, 25th London Regiment, was commanding.

At Jullundur on 6th April we were in close touch with the civil authorities, and at the request of the Commissioner (Lieut.-Colonel Burlton) posted a squadron of cavalry in the vicinity of Jullundur City and had a company of infantry "standing to" in cantonments, ready to move to Jullundur City at a moment's notice. General Dyer arrived back that day.

The 6th April passed off quietly both in Amritsar and Jullundur, and, apart from "Hartal" and speeches, nothing unusual happened.

The 7th, 8th and 9th April passed very quietly and I myself thought that the chances of any trouble had gone.

On Thursday, 10th April, at about 4 p.m., I received a code wire from Amritsar saying that trouble was expected and that some British infantry, gunners and a 'plane were urgently needed. Before I had finished deciphering this message, another code wire was received from Division repeating the above information and ordering us to send 100 British and 100 Mohomedan troops to Amritsar. I took these messages to the General and he gave me orders about moving the troops to Amritsar. When I got back to my bungalow I found another code wire from Amritsar saying the situation was serious, manager, National Bank killed and the bank in flames and asking us to expedite dispatch of troops. I at once took this to the General, who decided to send 200 Indian troops instead of 100. We both went down to the station to commandeer the first train to Amritsar. We found that the first train the troops could possibly catch was a passenger train leaving Jullundur about 3 a.m. We arranged with the stationmaster to commandeer this train. This was about 5.30 p.m. We then motored up to the two regiments, to whom I had sent a warning order by orderly, and gave orders for the move. Jullundur is not an important railway station and a special train could not be marshalled there.

We then went to the telegraph office to send a wire to Amritsar to tell them reinforcements were coming. On the way I said to the General "that if the situation at Amritsar was really serious the mob would have cut the telegraph wire."

On reaching the telegraph office, we found that the wires had been cut since 4 p.m. We then went back to the station and by about 8 p.m. got the message through from there *viâ* Ludhiana and Lahore.

At 1 a.m., 11th April, the party of 100 British (25th Londons) and 200 Indian ranks (100 of 59th Rifles F.F. and 100 of 2/151st Infantry) under the command of Major F. S. Clarke, D.S.O., London Regiment, left Jullundur, in a special train which had been sent from Lahore.

I saw the party off and gave Major Clarke a written order that he was to reach Amritsar at all costs, and that if the line was cut or damaged, he was to detrain his men and commandeer vehicles to get them to Amritsar.

This may seem pessimistic, but we had had no news of the situation at Amritsar since the message saying the situation was serious, except from officers who arrived by the Bombay mail who said that mobs were hanging round the line and shaking their fists as the train passed. The natural assumption then was that the line would be cut after dark. As a matter of fact, this was done near Manawala, but it had been repaired by the time the troop train arrived.

The party arrived at Amritsar safely at 5.15 a.m. That afternoon a message was received from Lahore saying that if the situation at Jullundur permitted it, General Dyer should proceed to Amritsar and take charge there.

General Dyer and myself immediately motored to see the Commissioner at Jullundur and, after a short discussion, the General came to the conclusion that he should go to Amritsar at once. We accordingly left Jullundur at 6 p.m. and arrived at Amritsar 9 p.m. (11th April).

We found Headquarters and the troops not on piquet duty at the railway station. The Deputy Commissioner (Mr. Miles Irving, I.C.S.) and the Deputy Superintendent of Police (Mr. Plomer) were there, and came to meet the General.

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The situation was discussed. The Deputy Commissioner pointed out that the situation was beyond his control and at 12 midnight gave me a written statement to that effect (which I have now). It was agreed that the City Inspector of Police should be summoned and the names of agitators taken with a view to their arrest.

Accordingly at 12.30 p.m. the General, accompanied by the Deputy Commissioner and Superintendent of Police and myself with an escort of 50 British soldiers went to the Kotwali in the city to fetch the City Superintendent back to the station. It was necessary to take an escort as complete lawlessness had prevailed in the city since 10th April. As we passed along, buildings which had been fired were still smouldering.

The General had a long interview with the City Inspector (Mohamed Ashraf Khan), many names of the leading agitators were taken down by me and arrangements discussed for their arrest.

From this interview, it was apparent that the situation was very serious indeed. Civil law had been flouted and the mobs were treating the troops, when they marched through the city, with contempt, spitting on the ground, &c. It appeared also that the villagers were gradually being drawn into the rebellion by malicious lies.

By the time we had arrived, all women and children in Amritsar had been placed in the fort, which was a great weight off one's mind, and which must have been a very serious problem to the Officer Commanding Amritsar on 10th April, with the few troops at his disposal.

Arrangements for next day's work were finished by 2 a.m. (12th). At 7 a.m. picquets were cut down to a minimum and the remainder of the troops and headquarters marched to the Rambagh and camped there.

At 10 a.m. all available troops marched to the Sultanwand Gate where an aeroplane reported a large mob.

We reached the mob who were most truculent and spat on the ground at us. "Hindi and Mussleman Ki. Jai" was being shouted and it was with the greatest trouble the mob was dispersed.

The General decided that a proclamation should be issued by him personally and, after that proclamation had been well circulated to take strong measures. After the mob had been dispersed we marched through the city and sent off detached parties from the Kotwali who effected some important arrests. On the way back a message was received from the Commissioner Lahore saying 200 armed Manjha Sikhs were intending to raid the city. The Commissioner, however, did not put much reliance on this report.

During the whole of the day, messages were pouring in from all round the district confirming the seriousness of the situation.

At 10 p.m. that evening a party of British soldiers in lorries proceeded to Ashrapore Mission Hospital to rescue two English ladies who were calling for help. In fact the situation had become a military one. We were a force cut off from Headquarters by all means of communication except by aeroplane. Supplies from the city were practically impossible to obtain.

When we arrived back from the city the General dictated his proclamation to me and I wrote and gave it to the Deputy Commissioner to have translated and proclaimed round the city. This proclamation is known as No. 1 Proclamation.

At 9 a.m. next day (13th) all available troops marched through the city again and No. 2 Proclamation was read out at all important streets and corners. The rebels sent a counter proclamation after us saying that we dare not fire on them and that we had no shoes, or some such nonsense.

On the way back to camp, a Criminal Investigation Department man came up to the Superintendent of Police and said that a meeting was going to be held at the Jallianwallah Bagh at about 4.30 p.m. that afternoon in spite of these stern proclamations.

The General Officer Commanding was told this at once but scarcely believed that the agitators would dare to meet in face of all his warnings. About 4 p.m. Mr. Rehill informed us that about 1,000 men had already collected at the Bagh and the intelligence officer gave me a letter from Mr. Lewis, Crown Cinema Manager, who had been in the city disguised as a native confirming this.

The General Officer Commanding then gave me orders for piquetting the main gates of the city and march to the Jallianwallah Bagh. With all the heavy duties and piquets, and after piquetting the main gates of the city and leaving a reserve, we found we could only muster 50 armed Sepoys and 40 Gurkhas who were only armed with Kukris. We marched about 4.15 p.m. and dropped the piquetting parties for the main gates as we marched.

The party was led to the Jallianwallah Bagh by a guide, and arrived at a small alley just about broad enough for two men walking abreast. This necessitated leaving the armoured cars behind.

The General Officer Commanding, Colonel Morgan, Mr Rehill and myself, got out of the motor and advanced up the alley, the troops following us. Coming to the end of the alley we saw an immense crowd of men packed in a square, listening to a man on a platform who was speaking and gesticulating with his hands. It was very hard to estimate the size of the crowd. The General asked me what I thought the numbers were, and I said about 5,000 or so, but I believe it has been estimated at more like 25,000. The crowd was composed of men; no women or children were seen during the whole time we were there.

The troops deployed to the right and left of the exit of the alley and laid down.

The General Officer Commanding then ordered the men to open fire. After firing a few rounds the mob split up and two large subsidiary mobs gathered together into the two opposite corners of the Bagh. It looked for a minute as if they were meaning to rush us. The General Officer Commanding therefore gave orders to direct fire on these two crowds. The mob gradually disappeared. The party then marched back to the Rambagh. On arrival at the Rambagh the mens' pouches were examined; 1,650 rounds had been fired.

Fire was directed on the crowds and not individuals. The ammunition used was the ordinary ·303 Mark VI.

The men did not hesitate to fire and I saw no man firing high.

That night special precautions were taken in case of reprisals.

Next day (14th) Mr. Donald the Inspector-General of Police, Punjaub, informed us of the mob's intention of holding another meeting near the Golden Temple. The General Officer Commanding then sent for Sirdar Arur Singh, Manager Golden Temple and Sirdar Sindar Singh and ask them to help him and to stop this meeting.

Both these men promised to help and to deny the false rumours which were afloat about the bombing of the Golden Temple which had been invented by the agitators in order to get the sympathy of the Sikhs.

The general said to me that morning that the thing to do now was to keep the Sikhs from being disaffected.

In the evening a meeting of Heads of Communities was assembled and they promised to open their shops next day and the General promised them protection.

The shops were opened next day (15th) and no trouble ensued. Gurkhas help the police in patrolling

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the city, and a large piquet of 50 Gurkhas was posted in the Kotwali, a central spot, as a reserve. Barristers and Pleaders were made into special constables, who with their knowledge of law and order, were made responsible that law and order was kept.

The city soon became normal.

The General now laid himself out to keep the Sikhs from being contaminated.

On 21st April we accompanied a movable column to Gurdespur district and on 24th April to the Bugga Atari district. On these movable columns the General held large Burbars and spoke to the inhabitants.

Sikh officers from regiments in the Punjaub were sent to Amritsar to satisfy the regiments that the Golden Temple had not been bombed.

The General gathered together many retired Sikh officers whom he knew personally, and sent them round the villages to tell them not to be taken in by the agitators who wanted to use them as scapegoats.

As a result of all this, the Sikhs gradually learnt that all they had been hearing about the Government and the Rowlatt Bill were lies and all chance of the rebels getting the Sikhs on their side vanished.

On or about 29th April, the Stationmaster, Amritsar, called me up on the telephone, and said a very exceptionally large amount of sticks (lathis) were arriving and he asked for orders as to their disposal. I told him not to deliver them to consignees, but wait for orders. The General Officer Commanding and myself went down to the station that day to see them. One large storehouse was full up to the roof with them, and there were many more in trucks.

By obtaining statistics from the station books, it was found that in 1918, 12 bundles had arrived in March and April whereas March and April this year 1,056 had arrived.

These sticks were very thick and very heavy and a blow from them in a vital spot would kill a man at once.

We were very pleased at capturing what was evidently the enemy's arsenal.

On 4th May we received a code wire saying trouble with Afghanistan was anticipated and on 6th May that War had been declared with Afghanistan and that our Brigade was to mobilize being part of the Afghanistan Field Force. Accordingly, on 8th May, I left for Jullundur, the permanent Headquarters of the 45th Brigade.

Signed J. C. Briggs, *Captain*,
Brigade Major,
45th Infantry Brigade.

APPENDIX B.

EXTRACT FROM SPEECH OF ADJUTANT-GENERAL OF INDIA, SIR HENRY HAVELOCK HUDSON BEFORE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF INDIA ON 19TH SEPTEMBER, 1919.

The Honourable Lieut.-General Sir Havelock Hudson:—"My Lord, my only reason for intervening in this debate is to clear up one or two remarks which have been made by my Honourable friend the Pandit as regards the action of certain officers and others connected with the suppression of rebellion in Amritsar. I do not think the Honourable Member has given these events in their clear perspective, or in their proper perspective. The first event to which I shall refer is the Jallianwallah Bagh, and in order to give the situation as it would appear to the Officer Commanding at Amritsar, I must ask your Lordship's permission briefly to state the situation at Amritsar on the 10th March. We have the attempts of the crowd in the Civil Lines, the troops stoned and ordered, after due warning, to fire; the attack on the Telegraph Office; the Telegraph Master rescued by an Indian officer when in the hands of the mob; the murder of a European guard at the goods station; the murders of the Manager and Assistant Manager of the National Bank; the murder of the Manager of the Alliance Bank; the attack on the Chartered Bank; firing of the Town Hall and its sub-post office: looting of other post offices; attack on the Zenana Hospital; the assault on Miss Sherwood; the burning of the Indian Christian Church, and attempt to fire the C.M.S. Girls Normal School; the murder of a sergeant of the Military Works Department; a second attempt of the mob to break into the civil lines; troops again stoned and ordered to fire, later on towards nightfall systematic destruction of all lines of rail and telegraph communication; and finally, the destruction of two small railway stations and the looting of a goods train.

"My Lord, does not this read rather like the preamble of the Indemnity Act on the Gordon riots of which the Honourable Pandit kindly made us a present? The above would be the situation as it would appear to an officer who found himself in a position such as confronted the General when he assumed command at Amritsar on the 11th April last. It will be realized, I think, that the situation was one of unexampled gravity. The Commissioner of the Division had definitely stated 'that the situation had passed out of his control,' that he must rely on the military authorities to restore order by the exercise of military force. The city was in the hands of an unruly mob; organized attacks had been made on Government property; banks had been burned and looted; railway and telegraph communications had been interrupted; inflammatory posters inciting to 'die and kill' had previously been posted on the clock tower in the heart of the city, and the lives of Europeans had been taken in circumstances which I shall not describe in detail. It would be clear to the officer in command that the rebellion was not confined to Amritsar alone. He would be aware of the riots at Delhi and Lahore, and he would have had an opportunity of gauging the temper of the people by his personal observation. He would have been aware of the danger of the spread of the rebellion into the surrounding districts. As an officer in a highly responsible position, he would know that it was his duty to take all measures necessary to restore order, and that his actions would be judged by the measure of his success in so doing. He would also know that he would be held personally responsible for any action of his which might be considered to be in excess of the reasonable requirements of the situation. You cannot conceive that any officer on whom such a responsibility had been thrown would enter on his task in any spirit of light-heartedness; nor would an officer of his seniority and experience (he had 34 years' service) set about his task with a disregard of the sanctity of human life, or with a desire to exact reprisals for the acts of rebellion which had already been committed. His first act would be to dispose his troops with a view to the protection of life and property. His second would be to warn the populace as to the result, if it became necessary, to use military force in the suppression of further disorder. These are the steps which were in fact taken by the officer in command at Amritsar.

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"On the 11th and 12th he reorganized his troops and on the 12th he marched a column round and through the city in order that a display of force might have its effect on the minds of the populace. We have it on record that the bearing of the inhabitants was most insolent, and that many spat on the ground as the troops passed. From the shouts of the mob it was clear that they were in an entirely unrepentant spirit. No military force was used on this occasion as the officer in command decided to issue proclamations as to his future intentions before employing such force. From a military point of view he would have been quite justified, I hold, in using force on that day, but the General Officer Commanding decided to pursue his policy of patience and conciliation. A proclamation was issued in the evening of the 12th and on the morning of the 13th April, the Officer Commanding marched with a body of troops through all the main streets of the city, and announced by beat of drum his intentions of using force should occasion arise. The people were permitted to collect in order to hear the proclamations.

"The announcement that unlawful assemblies would be dispersed by fire was received with jeers and cries indicating that the mob had no belief in the sincerity of the warning given. While the troops were still in the city, information reached the Officer Commanding at about 12 o'clock that, in spite of his proclamation, a big meeting of rebels would be held at the Jallianwallah Bagh at 4.30 that afternoon. As this place had been used before for meetings, and as large assemblies had been addressed by the heads of the agitation on the 29th and 30th March and the 2nd April, and as a dense mass meeting had assembled here on the 6th during the *hartal* and had listened to speeches intended to bring Government into hatred and contempt, it would have been clear to the officer in command that he might expect deliberate defiance of his orders. Now, he was well aware of the events of the 10th April when the murders of Europeans and the attacks on property had been made and when the firing which had been employed to suppress these disorders had been totally inadequate. The Officer Commanding at Amritsar had to decide about midday on the 13th of April how he would act if the projected meeting took place in direct defiance of his authority. After making dispositions for the safety of his command, he found that he had but a small striking force at his disposal. I believe the number was 25 men of one regiment and 25 men of two other regiments, belonging to the Indian Army, and, in addition, 40 Gurkhas armed with *kukris* only, and two armoured cars. Realising the gravity of the situation the Officer Commanding did not send, as he might have, a subaltern in charge of this small force. He realised that it was an occasion on which he, and he alone, must exercise the full responsibility. He marched this force straight to the Jallianwallah Bagh leaving the armoured cars which he had also taken with him behind, because they could not get into the Bagh. On reaching the Bagh his force was confronted by a vast assembly, some thousands strong, who were being harangued by a man who was standing on a raised platform. The Honourable Pandit would give us to believe that this was a fortuitous meeting of villagers and that they were listening to a lecture. That was not so in accordance with the facts, so far as I have been able to gather. It was clearly the duty of the Officer in Command to disperse this unlawful assembly. Realizing the danger to his small force unless he took immediate action, and being well aware of the inadequacy of the measures taken to restore order on the 10th of April, he ordered fire to be opened. The crowd was dispersed and the force was withdrawn. I have given the Council this narrative to show how the situation would be viewed by the soldier and will content myself with saying that from a military point of view the sequence of events justified the exercise of military force, and that the object of its exercise was fully attained. Also, from a purely military point of view, the Officer in Command would have been gravely at fault had he permitted the elements of disorder to continue unchecked for one moment longer."

* * * * * * * *

"My Lord, my object in recounting to this Council in some detail the measures taken by the military authorities to reconstitute civil order out of the chaos produced by the state of rebellion, is to show that there is another side to the picture which is, perhaps, more apparent to the soldier than to the civilian critic. No more distasteful or responsible duty falls to the lot of the soldier than that which he is sometimes required to discharge in aid of the civil power. If his measures are too mild he fails in his duty. If they are deemed to be excessive he is liable to be attacked as a cold-blooded murderer. His position is one demanding the highest degree of sympathy from all reasonable and right-minded citizens. He is frequently called upon to act on the spur of the moment in grave situations in which he intervenes, because all the other resources of civilization have failed. His actions are liable to be judged by *ex post facto* standards, and by persons who are in complete ignorance of the realities which he had to face. His good faith is liable to be impugned by the very persons connected with the organization of the disorders which his action has foiled. There are those who will admit that a measure of force may have been necessary, but who cannot agree with the extent of the force employed. How can they be in a better position to judge of that than the officer on the spot? It must be remembered that when a rebellion has been started against the Government, it is tantamount to a declaration of war. War cannot be conducted in accordance with standards of humanity to which we are accustomed in peace. Should not officers and men, who through no choice of their own, are called upon to discharge these distasteful duties, be in all fairness accorded that support which has been promised to them?" . . . .

APPENDIX C.

REPORT OF BRIG.-GENERAL R. E. H. DYER, C.B., OF 14TH APRIL, 1919.

APPENDIX XIV.

REPORT ON OPERATIONS 21.00, 14TH APRIL, 1919, TO GENSTAFF DIVISION.

I arrived here on night of the 11th April, and the same night went through the city to bring the Superintendent of Police in charge of the city to hear personally what he had to say.

After consultation with the Deputy Commissioner and police officials I determined with a view to showing the inhabitants that I had a sufficient military force to force them to law and order and also to arrest certain ringleaders. This was carried out between 12.00 hours and 15.00 hours on 12th April.

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I was aware that the inhabitants had been warned that they were not to hold meetings or followings, and that if they did so they would be fired on. To further enforce my wishes, a proclamation was proclaimed on morning of 13th by beat of drum in many of the main streets of the city, warning the inhabitants that unlawful acts would be punished by military force. On my way back from the city I was informed that the disaffected characters in the city had ordered a meeting in the Jallianwallah Bagh at 16.30 hours. I did not think this meeting would take place in the face of what I had done.

At 16.00 hours I received a report from the police that a gathering was beginning in the place mentioned above.

I immediately sent piquets to hold various gates of the city and marched with 25 rifles, 9th Gurkhas, and 25 rifles from detachments of 54th Sikhs F. F. and 59th Rifles F. F. making a total of 50 rifles, and also 40 Gurkhas armed with *kukris*. Two armoured cars also accompanied this party.

I entered the Jallianwallah Bagh by a very narrow lane which necessitated my leaving my armoured cars behind.

On entering, I saw a dense crowd estimated at about 5,000; a man on a raised platform addressing the audience and making gestulations with his hands.

I realized that my force was small and to hesitate might induce attack. I immediately opened fire and dispersed the crowd.

I estimate that between 200 and 300 of the crowd were killed. My party fired 1,650 rounds.

I returned to my Headquarters about 18.00 hours.

At 22.00 hours accompanied by a force, I visited all my piquets and marched through the city in order to make sure that my orders as to inhabitants not being out of their houses after 20.00, had been obeyed.

The city was absolutely quiet and not a soul to be seen.

I returned to Headquarters at midnight. The inhabitants have asked permission to bury the dead in accordance with my orders. This I am allowing.

I am,
Sir,
Your most obedient Servant,
R. E. DYER,
Brig.-General, Commanding 45th Brigade

APPENDIX D.

TELEGRAM IN REPLY TO FOREGOING FROM 16TH DIVISION.

APPENDIX VII.

Telegram (by aeroplane) No. 250 S., from General Staff Division, to General Brigade, Amritsar.

Your B. 21. Your action correct and Lieutenant-Governor approves.

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